

## Message Text

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12

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03

H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 /061 W

----- 104337

R 100600Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2830

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

CINCPAC

USSAG

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 1685

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, EAID, LA, VN

SUBJ: TALK WITH DEFENSE MINISTER SISOUK NA CHAMPASSAK

1. IN THE COURSE OF A LONG TALK WITH DEFMIN SISOUK  
THE EVENING OF MARCH 8, HE MADE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

2. NVA BRIDGE AND PATROL BOATS. SISOUK SAID THAT HE  
HAD BEEN TO PAKSANE ON MARCH 7 TO SEE THE NVA PONTOON  
BRIDGE AND TO ASSESS THE SITUATION THERE. CONTRARY  
TO RUMORS CIRCULATING IN VIENTIANE, SISOUK AFFIRMED  
THAT THE NVA HAD NOT REPEAT NOT PUT ANY PATROL BOATS  
ON THE RIVER. THERE WERE TWO WORK BOATS NEAR THE  
BRIDGE BUT THEY WERE USED TO MANIPULATE THE PONTOONS.  
SISOUK SAID THAT HE HAD INSPECTED THE PONTOONS AND  
COULD CONFIRM THAT THEY WERE SUBMERSIBLE. IN HIS  
VIEW, NVA PONTOON BRIDGES CAN BE FLOATED IN A MANNER  
WHICH PUTS NOT ONLY THE PONTOONS BUT THE BRIDGE  
ITSELF BELOW THE SURFACE OF THE WATER. SISOUK SAID  
HE LOOKED INTO ALLEGATIONS OF OVERFLIGHTS BY THAI  
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AND AMERICAN AIRCRAFT AND DETERMINED THAT THESE

WERE FALSE.

3. LETTERS FROM PRESIDENT THIEU. SISOUK SAID THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAD DISCUSSED AT THE CABINET MEETING ON MARCH 5 THE LETTERS RECEIVED BY THE KING AND HIMSELF FROM PRESIDENT THIEU AND HAD HELD FORTH IN HIS USUAL VEIN WITH REGARD TO THIEU'S SHORTCOMINGS, BLAMING THIEU FOR NOT COMPLYING WITH THE PARIS AGREEMENT AND UTILIZING THE THIRD FORCE TO MEDIATE DIFFERENCES WITH THE VC. IN THE COURSE OF THIS DISCUSSION, THE PRIME MINISTER RELATED THE CONTINUING NVA PRESENCE ALONG THE TRAIL TO THE CONTINUED AMERICAN PRESENCE IN THAILAND. THE PRIME MINISTER HAD SPECIFICALLY ALLUDED TO THE AMERICAN AIR COMMAND IN NAKHON PHANOM. COMMENT: THIS STRIKES US AS BEING A THOUGHT IMPLANTED BY PRINCE SOUPHANOUVONG WHO CRITICIZED THE U.S. PRESENCE AT NKP TO THE AMBASSADOR ONLY LAST WEEK (VIENTIANE 1622).

4. PRINCE BOUN OM AND VIENTIANE SIDE SHORTCOMINGS. SISOUK SPOKE VERY CANDIDLY ABOUT THE STATE OF AFFAIRS IN THE SOUTH AND THE PROBLEMS CAUSED FOR THE VIENTIANE SIDE BY PRINCE BOUN OUM'S FEUDAL ATTITUDE AND BLATANT CORRUPTION. SISOUK TOOK THE LINE THAT THE PATHET LAO LEADERSHIP WAS UNEDUCATED AND SECOND RATE. ACHIEVING A SATISFACTORY BALANCE OF POWER BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES SHOULD PRESENT NO PROBLEM BUT THE NEPOTISM AND CORRUPTION WHICH WERE RAMPANT ON THE VIENTIANE SIDE PLAYED INTO COMMUNIST HANDS. SISOUK SAID THAT HE COULD NOT CRITICIZE THE COMMUNIST EFFORTS TO CLEAN UP THE SITUATION AND THAT ALL RIGHT-THINKING LAO RECOGNIZED THAT MEANINGFUL CHANGES HAD TO BE MADE IN THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL LIFE OF THE COUNTRY. HE COULD SEE NO WAY, HOWEVER, OF BRINGING THE VIENTIANE SIDE FACE TO FACE WITH PROBLEMS OF THIS NATURE. COMMENT: NOTWITHSTANDING THE GENERALLY PESSIMISTIC TONE OF THIS CONVERSATION, SISOUK RECOGNIZES THAT THERE IS CONSIDERABLE STABILITY IN THE UNEASY BALANCE WHICH

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HAS BEEN ACHIEVED OVER THE PAST YEAR.  
WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Draft Date:** 10 MAR 1975  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**To:** STATE  
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